



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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SCIENTISTS STUDYING OYSTER WEIGHT GAINS

Why and how do oysters gain weight?

Experiments in feeding and fattening these shellfish, in order to determine the answer to this question, are now in progress at the Milford (Connecticut) laboratory of the Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Department of the Interior. Aid to the industry, by possible artificial development of a more salable product for the fall and winter seasons, is contemplated in the study.

Four large outdoor tanks, at the Milford Station are the scene of the tests. Into each tank, filled with waters fertilized by various nutritive substances, have been placed 100 oysters of known age. Growth measurements are determined periodically, and these results checked against tests with phosphates, nitrates, silica, dissolved oxygen, salinity, and hydrogen-ion concentration of the growing waters. Abundance of phytoplankton--all forms of algae, of free-floating vegetable organisms--is also recorded.

The Milford studies are being supplemented by similar observations in two Long Island Sound stations of the Service, where natural growing conditions have revealed waters of contrasting natures: one, where the waters have always been known to produce fat oysters; the other, where poor oysters have been the average.

Samples of oysters for glycogen and water content are collected from each of these stations--and a fourth, also, in Pensacola, Florida--at weekly intervals. Except at the latter station, where water temperature permits year-round study, these experiments will be carried on for only two months.

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